

22 January 1981

46

DAILY SUMMARY OF PUBLIC POSITIONS ON INF

Various European leaders clarified their positions while the media focused on President Reagan's statements about INF and the new US public relations effort in Western Europe. Soviet press commentary played up the theme of a defensive, disorganized US administration.

UK

Thatcher, responding to Labor leader Foot in Commons this week, claimed her government is satisfied with the traditional arrangement for basing US nuclear weapons in the UK. Defense Secretary Heseltine said in a TV interview that London turned down an opportunity for "dual key" when NATO agreed to INF deployment in 1979. According to a Guardian poll, over 60 percent of the British public opposes stationing cruise missiles in the UK, but a majority still rejects unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Germany

At yesterday's SPD convention in Dortmund, former Chancellor Schmidt said the West should be ready to compromise with the Soviets and not cling to the zero option. Vogel elaborated that the SPD "advocates the constructive elements" in the Andropov proposals. Press reviews of Mitterrand's statements to the Bundestag were mixed; independent and conservative papers generally were impressed by his staunch pro-NATO stance and endorsed non-inclusion of French nuclear forces in the Geneva negotiations. Left-of-center papers and some independents saw the address as hawkish and unrealistic. Media reports also highlight statements by President Reagan on the Geneva talks. Most include that he stands by the zero option, but is ready to consider other offers.

France

French press reaction to Mitterrand's Bundestag speech was generally favorable, although some papers hinted that it could complicate relations with the West German SPD and even bolster Soviet arguments that French forces should be taken into account in negotiations. Le Monde yesterday noted that although President Reagan has "made bold proposals with the support of the Europeans... one still wonders if he really wants to reach an agreement."

Netherlands

Foreign Minister Van Den Broek and Defense Minister de Ruiter this week presented a report to the Dutch parliament on the Andropov proposals that described them as "unbalanced and destabilizing" but nevertheless as indicating some Soviet movement toward the Western view. The report ruled out consideration of French and British nuclear forces at Geneva.

Italy

Top Socialist Party official Paolo Vittorelli in the party paper Avanti yesterday stressed the need for European leaders to prepare alternatives to the zero option for presentation to Vice President Bush.

USSR

TASS yesterday claimed that the creation of a cabinet-level group on US public policy concerning INF reflected "an administration intimidated by the scope of the antiwar movement" at home and abroad. Likewise, an Izvestia commentary argued that the US administration has become afflicted with dissension and that its foreign policy has "frightened" its allies and citizens.

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